The Rise of the Sa'dis in Morocco

by Daniel Pipes
The Maghreb Review
1984
http://www.danielpipes.org/8220/rise-of-the-sadis-in-morocco

Translations of this item:

- French

Bordering both on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, across a narrow strait from Portugal and Spain, Morocco was for centuries a focal point in the conflict between Christians and Muslims. It supplied much of the manpower when Muslims took the offensive against Europe and it bore the brunt of Christian aggression when Muslims were compelled to defend themselves. The first European attack on Morocco of the modern era occurred in 1401 when Castilian troops failed to take the port city of Tetuan; then in 1415, the Portuguese succeeded in their attack on another port, Ceuta, an event commonly considered to mark the beginning of modern European imperialism. The capture of Ceuta provoked a massive response among the Muslims of Morocco and led to the assumption of a new dynasty, the Banu Wattas, in 1428.

Yet the Banu Wattas were unable to regain the whole of Morocco or to coordinate a Muslim counterattack. To the contrary, the authority of the Moroccan central government (known as the *makhzan* in Arabic) weakened as minor independent states emerged, organized by tribal chiefs, Sufi masters, and town leaders. Even Wattasid efforts to maintain control over the flat agricultural lands usually under the *makhzan*'s authority failed: the dynasty governed the capital at Fez and its immediate environs, but it could not hold other major cities; and its authority in such remote regions as Sus in the far south of Morocco was merely nominal.

A weak *makhzan* invariably means a fragmented countryside; rugged mountains and wide arid zones divide the Moroccan terrain, obstructing transportation, fostering regional spirit, and leading to a proliferation of small political entities. As Wattasid power declined, leaders of outlying regions threw off their allegiance to the *makhzan*, proclaimed their own independence, and established their autonomy through raids against their neighbors. Wattasid attempts to reincorporate these statelets met vigorous opposition, however, as much of Morocco fell prey to brigandry and petty warfare, causing living conditions to plummet.

One indication of the anarchy was the ability of nomads to expel farmers from the fertile plains and to use their lands for herd grazing, precipitating a famine and undermining the economic bases of urban life. As lawlessness reduced trade, weekly fairs replaced permanent settlements; farmers who remained on their lands had to contend with nomadic incursions, tribal taxes, levies by their Sufi masters (known in much of Africa as *murabit*s), and even an occasional demand for tribute from the Wattasid sultan. Other aspects of Moroccan life, especially the military and the cultural, also suffered.[1]

Portuguese attacks on Morocco compounded these tribulations. The independence of Portugal had been declared in 1143 but it required yet two and a half centuries of battling to establish the new state in the face of Spanish and Muslim opposition. Once the Portuguese achieved this, the momentum of their victories took them across the straits of Gibraltar to attack Muslims on their home territory. The conquest of Ceuta in 1415 then opened an era of Portuguese expansion and exploration which changed the face of the earth. Unlike the still-lingering Crusading efforts, the attack on Ceuta had only a minor religious component; its purpose was not so much to conquer Morocco, much less to convert its people, as it was to acquire ports along a vital sea route. The Portuguese settled only along the coasts in strongholds which served both as supply posts for their ships and as fortresses for raiding the interior.

In reaction to these Portuguese raids, Moroccans widely supported *jihad* (war fought in accordance with Islamic precepts), but the *makhzan* under Wattasid control could not unite the squabbling local rulers against their common enemy. Indeed, so pervasive was the internecine Muslim fighting that some factions made alliances with the Portuguese, further fragmenting the Moroccan efforts at a response. When the established political institutions proved incapable of action, Moroccans increasingly turned to their religious leaders for guidance. To understand why they did so, it is necessary to look at Moroccan Islam of the fifteenth century, and especially at its three most distinctive features, murabitism, sharifism, and mahdism.

(1) *Murabitism*. As in many other remote regions of the Maghreb, the Sufis had converted most of southern Morocco to Islam.[2] Sufi brotherhoods (known as *zawiya*s in North Africa) reached the northern Moroccan cities by the twelfth century and then spread rapidly through the rural areas. According to Alfred Bel, Sufis had wide success among the primitive Berbers because they presented Islam in a stark and powerful manner; no doubt their organizational strengths also appealed to the tribal leaders. *Zawiya*s expanded and multiplied so fast that they became a critical factor in Moroccan politics by the late fourteenth century; and they retained this role for the next three hundred years.[3] Perhaps the most outstanding Sufi leader was ash-Shaykh al-Jazuli, (d. 1465), founder of the Jazuliya brotherhood in the Maghreb.

At the time of the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta, the *murabit*s, directors of these *zawiya*s, had replaced the legalist-minded *'ulama'* as leaders of the Moroccan religious institutions; it was they who were sought out for guidance in matters personal, who wielded the greatest political influence, and who controlled large organizations. The *murabit*s even took over many of the ultimate bastions of *'ulama'* power; the religious schools (*madrasa*s). Further, they had a unique authority over their followers: the founder of a *zawiya* lodge claimed total control over the lives of his adepts, regulating their spiritual behavior, their business activities, and their social dealings. His successors then claimed all the founder's powers, one generation after the next.[4] As a result, *zawiya*s were a source of unusually disciplined political devotion which the Sufi leaders were ever more prone to use from the 1470s on, as the *makhzan* lost power and the *murabit*s found themselves in a position to disregard the political leaders and establish independent states.[5]

Thus it was that *zawiya*s became the premier mechanism for Moroccans to express patriotic and religious resistance to the Portuguese.[6] As the Wattasids neither led the anti-Portuguese forces nor clamped down on *zawiya* activities, Sufi organizations became fully politicized and the *murabit*s further consolidated power. By 1500, they controlled the religious establishment and .directed social and political currents.

(2) *Sharifism*. Although the belief that descendants of the Prophet Muhammad have a special place as leaders is especially characteristic of Shi'i Islam, it also exists in the Sunni version—as represented even today by the Hashimite king of Jordan. In Morocco, this impulse is called sharifism, from *sharif* (literally, "noble"), a descendant of Muhammad. Sharifism came early to Morocco; the first independent Muslim dynasty in the region, the Idrisids, who ruled from 788 to 926, relied on Idris' descent from Muhammad for its legitimacy. Sharifism then went into decline for many centuries as Berber tribes ruled the country, tribes which could not plausibly claim Arabian descent and which had no need to. In the absence of *sharif*s as rulers, the general prestige of Muhammad's family declined. As one example of this, in contrast to earlier and later times, few *sidi*s (holy men) of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries claimed to be *sharif*s. Sharifism then revived in the fifteenth century during the era of widespread dissatisfaction with existing leadership; Bel calls this explosive change an "epidemic of sharifism."[7]

Murabitism helped spread sharifism, for Sufis typically pay great attention to the person of Muhammad as an ideal Muslim and his descendants are seen as lesser models. The *sharif*s won further prestige by joining *zawiya*s and becoming their leading members. *Murabit*s and *sharif*s forged a profitable alliance; *zawiya*s gained from this connection to the Prophet's family while *sharif*s placed themselves in the mainstream of Islamic life in Morocco. Some *sharifs* even founded their own *zawiyas*: conversely, "the founders of Sufi orders and influential *murabits* increasingly assumed sharifian qualities. Murabitism and sharifism ended as one."[8]

(3) *Mahdism*. As in so many other Muslim communities facing economic disruption and political turmoil, the Moroccans turned to mahdism, belief in the imminent arrival of the Islamic messiah, called the *mahdi*. Like sharifism, this too is an idea more associated with Shi'i Islam than Sunni, yet it also had great importance among Sunni Muslims, especially in modern times (the most renowned example being the Sudanese Mahdi). Sufi thought in Morocco at this time expressed a strong popular hope for divine help with current problems: thus it became increasingly mahdist in orientation.[9] One of the *hadith*s reporting the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad circulating in Morocco claimed that the mahdi would manifest himself as a *sharif* from the Sus area of southern Morocco, a coastal area hemmed in by the desert. Thus did sharifism and mahdism also coalesce as Moroccan Muslims yearned for miraculous intervention to restore the stable world of their ancestors.

Despite these yearnings, Morocco under the Banu Wattas was a society unable to act. Regionalism so paralyzed it that even an overwhelming consensus for response against the Portuguese did not help. In the words of Henri Terrasse, "Christian attacks troubled the country without causing it to organize."[10] Thus did the opportunity arise for the religious organizations, ill-equipped as they

were, to usurp the role of state institutions. Frustration continued to grow as internal anarchy and external attacks persisted. The conviction spread that only a *mahdi* claiming sharifian descent and acting as a *murabit* leader would be able to mobilize the Moroccans into action.

When the Portuguese conquered Agadir Bay in 1505 and erected a fort there, they established a first presence in an area usually under *makhzan* control. Six years later a man who called himself Muhammad al-Qa'im bi-Amri'llah appeared and claimed to be sent to lead the *jihad* against the Christian aggressors. The manner in which he and his sons rose to power is the subject of this inquiry.

Accounts of the Sa'di rise to power are numerous but sketchy; by collating the information they offer, it is possible to piece together a single narrative. I have located nine notices on the Sa'di origins, eight in Arabic and one in Spanish.[11]

(1) Muhammad b. 'Ali ibn 'Askar (1529-1576), *Dawhat an-Nashir*, a biographical work.[12] A *murabit* of the Jazuli *zawiya*, Ibn al-Mubarak "ordered that the tribes of Sus obey the two sharifian sultans, Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad al-A'raj and Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ash-Shaykh [the two sons of al-Qa'im bi-Amri'llah]. He recommended that they be just and he preached *jihad* so that they would take action against the Christian strongholds along the coast."

This account emphasizes the two factors instrumental to the emergence of Sa'di power: a connection with the *murabit*s of Sus and an intention to expel the Portuguese from Morocco.

(2) Ibn 'Askar records the inscription on the tombstone of Shaykh al-Matghari of the Dar'a region, again in *Dawhat an-Nashir*.[13] The inscription stated that al-Qa'im's sons al-A'raj and ash-Shavkh "were among [al-Matghari's] disciples and [that] it was he who brought them to power (*wa-bi-sababihi kanit da'watuhuma*)."

Al-Ifrani in *Nuzhat al-Hadi* suggests that al-Matghari filled a function of Dar'a similar to that of Ibn al-Mubarak in Sus.[14]

(3) Ibn al-Qadi (1553-1595), *Jadwat al-Iqtibas* or *Durrat as-Suluk*, quoted by 'Abdallah al-Ifrani in *Nuzhat al-Hadi*.[15] During a visit to Medina, al-Qa'im had a dream which a holy man interpreted to mean that his sons would someday rule their people. On return to Morocco, al-Qa'im spread the news of this prediction; as no one contradicted him, he made a successful bid for power in A.H. 915/A.D. 1509-10.

Expectation that a leader would appear to lead the Moroccans had grown intense: the fact that al-Qa'im's dream took place when he was in a holy city reflects the growing Islamic sentiment for action against the Portuguese.

(4) 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Fasi (1631-1685), *Zahrat ash-Shamarikh*,[16] no longer extant; quoted in al-Ifrani, *Nuzhat al-Hadi*.[17] The Christians refused to negotiate with Muslim spokesmen about

ransoming prisoners or ending hostilities until the Muslims had a leader capable of enforcing an agreement on all Moroccan factions. Brigands of the Jasima tribe captured a group of merchants from Sus as they were travelling, took their merchandise, and brought them before the Jasima leader, Ibn al-Mubarak, who ordered their release and the restoration of all their property. On return to Sus, the merchants concluded that Ibn al-Mubarak was the person to unite the Muslims and to deal with the Portuguese. A delegation returned to the Jasima tribe to propose that Ibn al-Mubarak become the Muslim leader, but he declined their proposal, saying that he preferred to devote himself to religious duties. Instead, he referred them to a *sharif* in Dar'a, a *mu'adhdhin* (the man who calls Muslims to prayer, muezzin) named Muhammad al-Qa'im who claimed that his two sons were destined to rule in Morocco. "So the people of Sus went to this *sharif*, brought him back [from Dar'a] to their country, and gave him money to maintain himself and his children. The *sharif* remained among them, fighting the enemy who occupied their land until his death."

In this account, al-Qa'im's rise is explained by the need for a powerful Muslim figure capable of dealing effectively with the Portuguese. Being a *sharif*, having a religious profession, and claiming his sons would rule contributed to al-Qa'im's qualifications to rule.

(5) An anonymous account, found in the margin of a copy of al-Fasi's *Zahrat ash-Shamarikh,* quoted by al-Ifrani in *Nuzhat al-Hadi*.[18] When Wattasid authority in Sus declined and Christian attacks threatened the Moroccans, they sought counsel with the saintly Ibn al-Mubarak, explaining to him that their disunity inhibited proper response to the Portuguese. They proposed to obey him and offer him their *bay'a* (oath of allegiance), and to follow him to battle against the Portuguese. But the saint refused to agree to their proposal and referred them instead to "a *sharif* at Tagmadert in the Dar'a who is certain his two sons will have a glorious future. Go to him and ask him to accept your *bay'a*. He will be amenable and will help you in your plans."

In contrast to the preceding account, this anonymous version has the Moroccans taking the initiative to seek out a leader, not just responding to the Portuguese demand for one.

(6) Muhammad b. at-Tayyib al-Qadiri (1712-1773), *Nashr al-Mithani*, reporting on the authority of al-'Arabi b. Yusuf al-Fasi, *Mir'at al-Mahasin*.[19] A *murabit* predicted what al-Qa'im would look like before he appeared. The Banu Wattas governed badly and so when war erupted between the Christians and the people of Sus (that is, following the Portuguese conquest of Agadir Bay in 1505), al-Qa'im's two sons pleaded for aid from the Wattasids, who supplied them with money and soldiers. The brothers gathered allies among the tribes, gained some victories over the Christians, and then turned against the Wattasids.

According to this notice, even though the Wattasids did not control Sus, they could provide men and provisions for *jihad* there when local leaders requested it. Wattasid support gave the Sa'dis their first power base which they then expanded through alliances and military victories. Several of the later sources stress that initial backing by the *makhzan* had a crucial role in the Sa'di rise.

(7) Abu'l-Qasim b. Ahmad az-Zayyani (1734-1833), *at-Turjuman al-Mu'rib*.[20] The people of Sus had long referred to al-Qa'im when they needed help, "on account of his learning, his piety, his zeal for *jihad*, and his being a *sharif*." The Portuguese fort at Agadir and the anarchy in Sus prodded him to invite the tribal chiefs of Sus to a banquet. When they had assembled, al-Qa'im urged them to take up *jihad* by making a challenge: he said that they were not true Muslims so long as they lacked a leader who could suppress the anarchy among Muslims and fight the Portuguese. On hearing this, the tribal chiefs retired to discuss their options and decided to make al-Qa'im their leader. He accepted this charge on the condition that each tribe send ten notables for his forces (to insure a unified operation). The chiefs agreed, they swore allegiance to al-Qa'im, and sent him their notables for the *jihad*.

Az-Zayyani mentions neither *murabit* nor Wattasid support for al-Qa'im but portrays him rising through his own leadership. It was he and not Ibn al-Mubarak who acted as the wise leader and who initiated the *jihad* effort, in contrast to the far more passive figure of al-Qa'im portrayed in the other chronicles. Also unlike the other accounts, this version is elegantly written and contains a wealth of detail, such as speeches, suggesting that it was embellished for story-telling purposes. Further, the flattering view of al-Qa'im suggests that this account was later rewritten to please al-Qa'im's descendants, the sultans. Roger le Tourneau notes that az-Zayyani fails to record his sources of information and also that this version includes a major chronological error; he does not, however, dismiss az-Zayyani's account but withholds judgment on its validity.[21]

(8) An anonymous account, *Ta'rirh ad-Dawla as-Sa'diya*.[22] Al-Qa'im's sons joined the *jihad* long after it had been underway, bringing with them forces supplied by the Wattasids. "The two brothers ended up among the leaders of the struggle and circumstances then propelled them into power."

(9) Diego de Torres, *Relación del origen y sucesso de los Xarifes*.[23] Al-Qa'im "made noise and acquired a reputation" in the Dar'a region by claiming that his sons would someday become sultans of Morocco. For this reason he sent them to the Wattasid court in Fez where they made a favorable impression on the king. When al-Qa'im learned how well they had prospered at the court, he instructed them to request a command of troops against the Christians. Not heeding a warning about them, the Wattasid ruler made al-Qa'im's sons expeditionary leaders and sent them off to fight the Portuguese.

De Torres published his account of the Sa'di dynasty in Seville in 1586 after spending "the better part of his life" in North Africa ransoming Christian captives for the Portuguese king.[24] His account of these events emphasizes al-Qa'im's ambitions and his sons' active role in fulfilling them. While the Arabic accounts concentrate either on the father's selection as leader or the sons' fighting the Portuguese, de Torres connects the two and shows how both actively sought power.

Combining information from all nine accounts, the Sa'di rise to power reads as follows:[25] Distressed by Portuguese attacks (accounts 5, 7) and internal anarchy (4), the people of southern Morocco sought a leader; the Portuguese demand for an emissary able to represent all Muslim

forces also prodded them (4). In Sus, the eminent *murabit* Ibn al-Mubarak was asked to assume political power but refused (4, 5); instead, he recommended al-Qa'im bi-Amri'llah (1, 4, 5). Al--Matghari similarly urged people of Dar'a to support al-Qa'im (2). Al-Qa'im distinguished himself in several ways: through his personal excellence (7), his religious qualities (3, 4, 7), his appearance, which fulfilled a *murabit*'s prediction (6), his initiative (7, 9), and the claim that his sons would eventually rule Morocco (3, 4, 5, 9).

It is not clear who was the first Sa'di leader, al-Qa'im (3,4,5,7) or his two sons (1,2,6,8,9). Perhaps all three worked for the same end through different means, al-Qa'im winning a position at the head of a tribal confederacy (4, 7) and his sons cooperating with the Wattasids (6, 8, 9). The fact that al-Qa'im died in 1517, before any of the Sa'di's major battles had been fought, may explain why some chroniclers of the dynasty de-emphasize his role. *Jihad* was the raison d'être for his authority but al-Qa'im rarely, if ever, encountered the Christian foe, whereas his sons fought the Portuguese even before 1517 and then more after that date. This may explain their being remembered as the initial Sa'di leaders, even if al-Qa'im founded the line.

The sons of al-Qa'im achieved all their father hoped of them, but using tactics he could not have foreseen. They began their campaigns by taking on the Mazwar tribe, a traditional antagonist of their people and, fortuitously, an ally of the Portuguese. The Sa'di brothers spread calumny against the Mazwar among the Portuguese, raided them, fought with them, and ended up assassinating their chief in 1518. Neutralizing the Mazwar effectively ended the Christian thrust into the interior of Morocco, for on their own the Portuguese lacked the force to invade. Then—and here the Sa'di advance departed from script even more radically—the Sa'dis allied with the Portuguese against the Wattasids. Discarding their earlier appeal to *jihad*, Sa'di forces were directed to take those regions still under *makhzan* control. Using the pretext of needing to organize a joint operation with the Wattasids against the Portuguese installation at Safi, the Sa'dis entered Marrakesh in 1525 and assassinated the king. They continued to recognize Banu Wattas sovereignty in Marrakesh but prevented the city from giving tribute to the *makhzan,* thus provoking a Wattasid attack on the Sa'dis and ending in a peace treaty between the two.

During the nine-year period of peace that followed, the Sa'dis further consolidated their hold over the *murabits*, the tribes, and the territories they held. In 1537, they attacked the Wattasids and won a resounding victory at Bu 'Aqba, making them a full-fledged power in Morocco and a direct threat to the continuation of Wattasid control over the *makhzan*. The Sa'dis then turned against the Portuguese—at last—and expelled them from Agadir in 1541; soon after, the Portuguese evacuated two other forts, at Azemmour and Safi, leaving them only one isolated stronghold at Mazagan and permanently ending the threat they posed to southern Morocco. Sa'di attention was next turned to northern Morocco and by 1545 most of the Wattasid dominions fell to them; Fez was occupied in 1549. In 1554, following a Wattasid alliance with the Ottomans (whose rule at this time extended to Algeria), the Sa'dis again allied with a Christian power, this time the Spanish, and together they beat the Wattasids and Ottomans. Finally, the Sa'dis turned against the Spanish and expelled them from most of Morocco. By 1565, the field was cleared as the Sa'dis alone controlled virtually all the non-mountainous regions of Morocco.

Southern Morocco was ready for strong leadership and the Sa'dis provided it, but why was it that of all the potential strongmen in Sus, it was they who came to the fore? In part, because they fit into the context of murabitism. sharifism, and mahdism: al-Qa'im bi-Amri'llah won the support of such leading *murabit* figures as Ibn al-Mubarak in Sus and Shaykh al-Matghari in Dar'a: he credibly claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad: and he fulfilled mahdist expectations by his physical appearance and his conduct.

Second, Sus being the region of greatest ferment, the Sa'dis had an advantage coming from Dar'a, permitting them to stand outside the intense local rivalries of Sus. At the same time, al-Qa'im could manipulate tribal differences to his own benefit. For example, the long-standing enmity between his people and the Mazwar tribe, an ally of the Portuguese, stood the Sa'dis well when they sought to lead the anti-Christian forces. The presence of al-Qa'im's sons at the Wattasid court constituted a third advantage; years of service to the ruler taught them Moroccan politics at first hand and gave them access to soldiers and provisions when they returned to Sus. In addition to material aid, Wattasid patronage distinguished the Sa'dis from their rivals in the area and imbued them with a special claim to authority.

Fourth, the Sa'dis did not shrink from taking advantage of any circumstances in the pursuit of power. They exploited a longing for order in Sus to assert control over the region and they used the popularity of *jihad* sentiments against the Portuguese to mobilize support for their ambitions. Timely alliances with the Portuguese and Spanish may have contradicted the ideals of *jihad* but they furthered the Sa'di cause; the Portuguese conquest of Agadir in 1505 originally stimulated the emergence of the Sa'dis as leaders, but it took another thirty-six years for them to attack the Portuguese. In retrospect, it appears that Morocco's crises served the Sa'dis as the means to attain power.

Members of the prophet's family took advantage of their immense prestige to make the monarchy their permanent preserve from the Sa'dis onward. Just as the *sharif*s took control of many *zawiya*s in the fifteenth century, they captured the *makhzan* in the sixteenth. Before long, Moroccans took it for granted that their ruler must be a *sharif*; if an individual king could be deposed or killed, another *sharif* was expected to replace him. During a period of anarchy that lasted for thirty years, 1727-57, for example, the exclusive right of the *sharifs* to rule Morocco went almost unchallenged as all twelve kings during these years belonged to the ruling sharifian dynasty, the 'Alawis.

A rise in *murabit* influence over the government led to a decline in Moroccan culture; the Sa'dis brought with them the adherents of a mystical and intolerant faith who nearly extinguished intellectual life in the country.[26] A process begun by the Sufis in the fourteenth century was completed by the Sa'dis' bringing Sufism into the *makhzan* and to the royal court itself.

In these and other ways, the Sa'dis, who arose to dispose of limited problems along the southern coast, profoundly affected the political, cultural, and religious life of Morocco. To a great extent, this impact can be ascribed to two developments which occurred on the eve of their bid for power:

thorough Islamization of Morocco and the Christian offensive in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, both in the fifteenth century. Islam's hold on Morocco was completed with the spread of Sufism to the Sus and other regions in the south. With the entire population at least nominally Muslim (unless they already adhered to another monotheism), *murabit*s made efforts to extend their influence further by entering politics. Their bid for power succeeded particularly well because of the *makhan's* weakness—permitting the *murabit*s to establish independent rule and to participate in the rise to power of the upstart Sa'dis—but even had the Wattasids been stronger, the *murabit*s probably would have taken on a major role in public life, thanks to the extraordinary influence they wielded over their Sufi adepts. (Ironically, the ultimate reward for helping the Sa'dis organize and combat the Wattasids was mistrust and persecution; once the dynasty was securely established, Sa'di leaders. using the pretext of collecting back taxes, destroyed *zawiya* autonomy.)[27]

The Christian expansion also stimulated basic changes. When the Spanish *reconquista* ended with the collapse of Granada in 1492, the repercussions were felt through many parts of the Muslim world, and especially in the Maghrib. The destruction of Muslim Spain brought refugees, weakened Muslim power in the Mediterranean basin, and gave a new impetus to the Christian offensive in Morocco—symbolized by the capture thirteen years later of Agadir by the Portuguese. Moroccans responded to this threat by turning to a leadership with a religious orientation; even if the Sa'dis were far from pious leaders, as *sharif*s associated with the *murabit* movement and mahdist claims, they were the ideal vehicle for Islamic reaction.

Sa'di control over southern Morocco and their defense against the Christians both turned out to be of short duration. Anarchy quickly returned to the southern parts while the Portuguese threat turned out to be far less serious than it originally appeared. In the south, tribal leaders allowed al-Qa'im to assume leadership in the *jihad* effort without transferring their powers to him. In times of crisis, Berbers customarily appointed an *amenukal* (temporary chief) to lead a tribal confederacy against a specific enemy;[28] probably the first Sa'dis had a position similar to this. The extent to which tribes kept their independence became apparent not long after the Sa'dis captured Morocco's main cities, when the same tribes they had ridden to power revolted against them in classic Moroccan fashion. Ensconced in Marrakesh from 1525, the Sa'di rulers' position evolved from that of *amenukals* to kings, and the tribes treated them accordingly, by refusing their authority. "Though the Sa'dians profited from the military abilities of the Kinsmen at the foundation of their dynasty, they could never quite get this sharp sword back into its scabbard."[29]

The Portuguese threat turned out to be less serious than it originally appeared, for the Christians were unable to expand from their strongholds without local allies. Hindsight allows us to conclude that the Portuguese would soon have been expelled or isolated (in the fashion of Spain's hold, to this day, over Melilla and Ceuta) even without the Sa'di *jihad* effort.

The rise of the Sa'dis did, however, have major consequences for Moroccan politics, completing *murabit* and *sharif* domination of power. *Murabit*s lost their former independence but they maintained a key place in Moroccan political life until the French occupation in 1912. *Sharif*s have ruled Morocco since the first Sa'dis: the 'Alawis replaced them in 1631 and remain in power to this

day. By combining the temporal powers of a king with the spiritual ones of a *murabit*, the Sa'di dynasty transformed Moroccan political life; no Sunni leader since the Prophet had possessed such dual authority.[30]

On three occasions during the thirteen centuries of Muslim rule in Morocco, social movements originating in the south established a new dynasty and took control over the country. Two of these, the Almoravid and Almohad movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are well known; their spectacular origins, conquests in Spain, and brilliant cultural achievements assure continued interest in their history. But the third, the Sa'di movement of the sixteenth century, lacked their ideological flair and rapid success, not to speak of their cultural attainments.

[1] Henri Terrasse, *Histoire du Maroc* (Casablanca, 1949-50), volume 2, pp. 143-55 provides an analysis of the general situation.
[2] Alfred Bel, *La Religion musulmane en Berberie. Esquisse d'histoire et de Sociologie religieuses*. (Paris, 1938), p. 365.
[3] Robert Montagne, *La Civilisation du desert* (Paris, 1957), p. 82.
[4] René Brunel, *Le Monachisme errant dans l'Islam* (Paris, 1935), pp. 101-20.
[5] Information on their domains is scanty; it remains unclear whether they were predominantly tribal units under *murabit*s control or new, non-tribal political entities.
[6] C.-A. Julien, *History of North Africa* (London, 1970), trans. John Petrie, p. 211.
[7]Bel, *Religion musulmane*, p. 381.
[8] Terrasse, *Histoire du Maroc*, p. 146.
[9] Bel, *Religion musulmane*, pp. 381-82.
[10] Terrasse, *Histoire du Maroc*, p. 150.
[11] Several rare works could not be located for this study, including: Ibn al-Qadi, *Jadwat al-Iqtibas* (Fez, 1309); al-Mahdi b. Ahmod, *Kitab Mumti' al-Asma'* (Fez, 1313); and al-'Arabi al-Fasi, *Mar'at al-Mahasin* (Fez, 1323). On them, see 'Abd as-Salam ibn Suda, *Dalil Mu'arrikh al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* (Casablanca, 1960-65), 2 vols., 2nd ed.
[12] Ibn 'Askar, *Dawhat an-Nashir* (Fez, 1309), p. 84.
[13]Ibid., p. 65.
[14] Al-Ifrani, *Nuzhat al-Hadi*, ed. O. Houdas (Paris, 1888), p. 12.
[15] Ibid., pp. 9-10. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Les Historiens des Chorfa* (Paris, 1922), pp. 127-31 discusses *Nuzhat al-Hadi* at length.
[16] Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1937-49), Supplement II, p. 695, calls it *Zahr ash-Shamarikh*.
[17] Al-Ifrani, *Nuzhat al-Hadi*, pp. 9-10.
[18] Ibid., p. 10.
[19] Al-Qadiri, *Nashr al-Mithani* (Fez, 1910), p. 175. This account comes in the biography of Sidi Ibrahim al-Jalala who lived in the late sixteenth century and had no ostensible connection to the early Sa'dis.
[20] Roger le Tourneau, "La Naissance du pouvoir sa'dien," *Melanges Louis Massignon* (Damascus, 1957), 3:71-72 (Arabic text).
[21]Ibid., pp. 66-68.

[22] Anonymous, *Ta'rikh ad-Dawla as-Sa'diya*, ed. G. Colin (Rabat, 1934), pp. 3-4.
[23] Diego de Torres, *Relación del origen y sucesso de los Xarifes* (Seville, 1586); trans. by Charles de Valois, duc d'Angoulême, *Relation de l'origin et succez des Cherifs* (Paris, 1636), pp. 7-11.
[24] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[25] This account also incorporates al-Ifrani's own analysis in *Nuzhat al-Hadi*, pp. 9-12.
[26] Bel, *Religion musulmane*, p. 361-62.
[27] Al-Ifrani, *Nuzhat al-Hadi*, p. 12; Auguste Cour, *L'Etablissement des dynasties des Chérifs au Maroc* (Paris, 1904), pp. 98-100.
[28] Lloyd Cabot Briggs, *Tribes of the Sahara* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 127.
[29] Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago, 1978), p. 178.
[30] Bel, *Religion musulmane*, pp. 382-83. For other changes during the Sa'di period, see Mohamed Hajji, *L'Activité intellectuelle au Maroc a 1'époque Sa'dide* (Rabat, 1976-77), volume 1, pp. 50-67.

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